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LETTER DATED 28 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to forward the attached letter from Mr. Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of the Sudan.

In his letter, the Minister responds to the Eritrean Foreign Minister's letter contained in document S/1997/517, which claims the involvement of the Sudan in a so-called assassination plot on the life of the President of the Eritrean regime.

Once again, the Government of the Sudan condemns in the strongest possible terms the attempts of the Eritrean regime to distort its image. It would like to draw the attention of the international community and particularly the Security Council to the extent reached by that regime in its enmity to the Sudan.

The letter of the Foreign Minister of the Eritrean regime holds no credibility whatsoever. It is quite obvious from the letter itself that the story fabricated by the Eritrean regime, in collaboration with the Sudanese terrorist elements, the so-called National Democratic Alliance (NDA), harboured and sheltered by Eritrea, is a tasteless drama, directed by naive unprofessional persons, who lack the basic principles of logic.

The letter of the Sudanese Minister of External Relations reflects the contradictions and misinformation presented by the Eritrean regime in document S/1997/517 and its annex. Attached to the letter are statements circulated by the Sudan during the Summit meetings of the Organization of African Unity held at Yaoundi in 1996 and at Harare in 1997. These statements were distributed in response to the defamation campaign conducted by the Eritrean regime in that regional forum.

I would also like to remark on the presentation of the second enclosure of the Eritrean letter. The so-called confessions of the alleged accused were presented originally to the Security Council in Arabic; the language used was a

slang Sudanese Arabic. For those who know it, it is quite clear that the original text lacks coherence and logic in many of its parts. However, the English version does not reflect the ambiguity and incoherence that characterized those so-called "confessions".

The Government of the Sudan believes that the Eritrean letter does not merit any attention from the Council.

I request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Elfatih M. ERWA
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 27 August 1997 from the Minister for External Relations of the Sudan in response to the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea circulated in document S/1997/517

1. I feel obliged to respond to the letter dated 4 July 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council, concerning a so-called Sudanese conspiracy to assassinate the President of the Eritrean regime, and to its enclosures (S/1997/517, annex).

2. The aforesaid letter came as no surprise to the Government of the Sudan because the Eritrean regime has made a practice of precipitating crises with the Sudan and has constantly shown contempt for world public opinion by transmitting to the Security Council allegations that lack the necessary logic and offend against the rationality that would recommend them to the Council's consideration, given that the regime in question is in the best position to know that these allegations are groundless and are unsupported by any evidence.

3. The Eritrean regime that, by means of the letter from its Minister for Foreign Affairs, seeks to delude the international community into believing that there has been a Sudanese conspiracy to assassinate its President is the same regime that has persisted in threatening the security, peace and stability of the entire region. A regime that speaks of compliance with international norms has itself violated a whole series of international conventions and covenants, and first and foremost the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. This is evident from the many practices in which this regime has persisted in engaging.

4. We remind the international community of the Eritrean regime's collusion with terrorists and of the fact that it provided protection and a safe haven for terrorists who seized two Sudanese civil aircraft and saw fit to regard them as participants in a just struggle rather than terrorists. Such actions are in flagrant violation of article 7 of the 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft and article 7 of the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation. They are also incompatible with the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1994 and annexed to its resolution 49/60, in which States are urged not to grant political asylum to terrorists, and with the 1963 Tokyo Convention. As if this were not enough, the authorities of the Eritrean regime even detained some of the civilian passengers on the hijacked Sudanese aircraft. We should also like to remind the international community of the unprecedented step taken by the Eritrean regime when, in violation of the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, it handed over the Sudanese embassy building in Asmara, which is the property of the Government of the Sudan, to the so-called Sudanese armed opposition.

5. The Government of the Sudan informed the Security Council of many of these recurrent violations at the time they occurred, as set forth hereunder.

(a) The Eritrean regime has sponsored meetings of factions of the Sudanese opposition and the rebel movement in the southern Sudan, and its President has convened and presided in person over such meetings. These groups have the objective of overthrowing the legitimate Government of the Sudan, and the legitimacy of the armed action being taken by Sudanese terrorist factions against the Sudanese people has been proclaimed from Asmara. Details of these incidents were given in the letters from the Government of the Sudan addressed to the Security Council that were circulated in documents S/1995/522 and S/1995/569.

(b) The Eritrean regime has established camps to train groups of Sudanese terrorists in Eritrea and has allowed the leaders of these groups to make use of the various information media. It has been acknowledged that these forces have carried out military operations inside Sudanese territory from bases in Eritrean territory. We have also consistently reported that the President of the Eritrean regime has admitted before witnesses that, in the context of his commitment to support the Sudanese terrorists, "the sky's the limit". Such conduct is unprecedented and violates all the regional and international agreements that govern relations between States and, in particular, Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations. These incidents were communicated to the Security Council at the time they occurred in a letter circulated as an annex to document S/1996/358.

(c) The Eritrean regime has not contented itself with fostering groups of Sudanese saboteurs and terrorists and with providing them with military, media and logistic facilities, but its forces have also invaded border areas of the Sudan's Eastern Region and have attacked Kassala, Abu Gamal, Hamdayit, Gardah Awwad, Tugah, Hamashkoreb, Madississah and Aruma. Those forces have laid anti-personnel landmines targeted at civilians, and dozens of innocent people have been killed by them. Details of the above incidents were communicated to the Security Council in the letters that were circulated in documents S/1996/1007 and S/1997/11.

(d) In its enmity against the Sudan, the Eritrean regime has gone so far as to shoot down a Sudanese helicopter flying along the border inside Sudanese territory with a SAM-7 anti-aircraft missile fired from inside Eritrean territory, killing its crew. We communicated the details of this incident to the Security Council at the time it happened in a letter that was circulated as document S/1997/2.

(e) The Eritrean regime launched a further act of aggression against the Sudan when it used tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery of various calibres, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft weapons with the objective of occupying the Sudanese town of Toker and cutting the main road between Port Sudan and Khartoum. We communicated the details of this act of aggression to the Security Council in a letter that was circulated in document S/1997/271.

(f) The Eritrean regime reached new heights in its scorn and contempt for public opinion at the international and regional levels when the world

information media reported that its President, at a seminar held in Asmara, had admitted that his forces were fighting alongside those of the Sudanese rebels, that the elimination of the Sudanese Government was a major goal of his Government and that his forces had suffered losses in their war against the Sudanese army. These rash statements led ultimately to the arrest by the Eritrean regime of Ruth Simon, a correspondent for Agence France-Presse, who had given the world a true picture of this regime in reporting the proceedings of the seminar. The Sudan communicated the details of this incident to the Security Council in a letter that was circulated in document S/1997/342.

(g) The Eritrean regime has continued its aggression against the Sudan by maintaining the concentration of its military forces and supporting vehicles along the Sudanese-Eritrean borders. This prompted us to refer the matter to the Security Council by a letter that was circulated in document S/1997/395.

6. The incompetence of the Eritrean regime is clearly apparent, in particular, in its inept attempts to refute the documented facts that the Sudan has made it a practice to communicate to the Council. It has thus not even denied its attacks or the unlimited support that it provides to the terrorists and saboteurs that it sponsors. All this regime has done is to cite popular Sudanese proverbs and employ cryptic formulations and unintelligible expressions that it then presents to the Council in a clear attempt at deception. It does this instead of addressing the substance of the charges made against it in a serious and responsible manner, and it has continued to inundate the Council with vacuous documents and to waste the valuable time of its members.

7. As we remind the international community of the repeated consecutive violations of the Eritrean regime and its practices which contradict the simplest rule of international principles, we do not intend to avoid addressing the content of the letter of the Eritrean Foreign Minister about the so-called plot against the Eritrean President. We try to show the international community that there is a steady consistency between the Eritrean aggression on the Sudan and the letters addressed to the Security Council by the Eritrean regime. The successive alleged complaints against the Sudan in the Security Council is intentionally synchronized with the plans of military activities in the Sudanese Eritrean borders. The leadership of the Eritrean regime is used to timing its alleged complaint before its military aggression inside the Sudanese territory in order to justify its military operations. This is the exact situation now on the Sudanese Eritrean borders, where Eritrea is mobilizing and gathering its troops. The Eritrean regime continues to threaten the Sudan with more military operations targeting Sudanese cities and roads.

8. In the letter of the Eritrean Foreign Minister, the Eritrean regime wanted to delude the international community through attempting to convince it of a Sudanese conspiracy targeting its President. An intelligent reader cannot avoid noticing that the same circulated document is not a disgrace to the Sudan, as Eritrea claims, but a certificate of condemnation to the Eritrean regime itself. The letter of the Eritrean Foreign Minister publicly confesses to the Security Council that the accused has infiltrated into Eritrea to join the Sudanese opposition, the so-called Democratic National Alliance which uses Eritrea as a base. This is stipulated in paragraph 3 of that letter. The Eritrean regime forgot that this is a complete acknowledgement of the shelter it provides to the

armed elements that target the peace and security of the Sudan. It is a confirmation of the information the Sudan has continued to provide the Council with since 1994. This avowal presented to the Security Council by Eritrea itself constitutes a valid proof of the flagrant violations this regime has committed to all the principles of the United Nations Charter. This matter merits a condemnation of the Eritrean regime from the regional and international communities.

9. The so-called (Captain) the named Naser Eldin Abubakr Aba ElKhairet, whom Eritrea had alleged that the Sudan has sent to assassinate its President, is a citizen who has no relationship with the organs and institutions of the Government of the Sudan. He neither occupies any official post nor holds any military rank since his dismissal from the Sudanese Armed Forces as a Corporal in February 1992 for his ill behaviour.

10. To present the available information of the so-called accused, I would like to cite some information from his personal file while he was in service and the reasons for his dismissal:

(a) During the basic training period for the Sudanese soldiers, the aforementioned, after having been admitted to the service in 1986, attacked a restaurant with some of his colleagues. After eating, they tied up the restaurant owner and assaulted him. The whole group was subjected to a military investigation and administrative punishment;

(b) While he was in Um-dafoog with the Border Forces in Western Sudan, he was accused of being bribed by smugglers of Arabic-gum. He also stole sugar from some merchants. He was therefore subjected to a court martial;

(c) He robbed a grocery in Nyala in Western Sudan. He was convicted and imprisoned for six months and subsequently dismissed from the service for ill behaviour.

11. After his dismissal from the services for the above-mentioned reasons, he committed a number of crimes and offences. He has a large criminal file in the Sudanese Police Organs, which can be summarized as follows:

(a) The so-called Aba El Khirat was captured with some of his colleagues and fellow drinkers and drug addicts, after being struck on the head by an axe in a gambling party in the town of Rehaid El Berdy in Western Sudan;

(b) He was accused of dealing with armed robbery gangs in the Western borders of the Sudan, due to his suspected movements and to the existence of large sums of money, the source of which was not identified;

(c) Many police reports were filed against him by a number of merchants, to the effect that he cheated them and obtain sums of money under the pretext of bringing them goods from the border region, and he failed to fulfil that;

(d) The records of the Sudan Police in Zalengi, Nirtiti, Rehaid El Berdy, Um-dafoog in Western Sudan contains a number of official complaints against him, totalling twelve;

(e) He embezzled sums of money from his father's Mill where he worked for some time, which led to a disagreement between him and his father.

12. It is worth mentioning that the named Aba AlKhairet was seen by a psychiatrist during his imprisonment. We present a brief account of the doctor's report:

(a) The criminal history of the accused stems from his being brought up in a broken home. It is evident that he used drugs during his childhood and led gangs of disorder and havoc. It is found that he was dismissed from the primary school because he quarrelled with one of the teachers;

(b) Crime is widespread in his family, whereby his brother Ibrahim Abakar, was arrested because he was accused of murdering his wife, while his younger brother was tried in a theft crime and his oldest brother was tried in a crime of fraud, after having impersonated a Captain in the Customs Police. This affirms the instability in his up-bringing and explains his criminal tendencies;

(c) From the analysis of his personality, Aba ElKhairet likes fame. He claims heroic fantasies and suffers from a publicity complex. He stated he would not mind appearing in the media "even if this led to his death".

13. The second annex of the letter of the Eritrean Foreign Minister clearly shows that the text of the alleged confessions, which contains the names of all Sudanese Officials from the President of the Republic to the most junior officer and soldier of the Sudanese army is an Eritrean creation and fabrication. It also reflects the inability of the Eritrean regime even in fabricating accusations and planning conspiracies. This indicates unprofessionalism and lack of experience, in addition to ignorance of the basics of intelligence work.

14. We cite below some remarks about the contents of the second annex of the Eritrean Foreign Minister:

(a) The so-called confessions stipulates that Aba ElKhairet stated that he left the service as a Sergeant Major. The official records in his file shows that he was dismissed as a Corporal;

(b) He mentioned that he was trained with some terrorists from a number of countries and that he graduated on 1 January 1992 after having left the service in 1991. This means, according to the Eritrean story, that he was trained during his military service and this contradicts what the accused himself has said in the same document, about being trained after joining the Sudanese Public Security after his dismissal;

(c) The aforementioned also stated that he had left the military service in 1991 for family reasons. The official documents prove that he was dismissed in February 1992 for ill behaviour;

(d) The above-mentioned stated that he was born in 1965. However his official file shows that he was born in Zalangi in 1968;

(e) The aforementioned stated in his alleged confessions that he joined the Sudanese Armed Forces in 1982. But his official file shows that he joined the service on 13 February 1986.

15. The dismissed Corporal Naser El Din Aba AlKhairet is a person who escaped outside Sudan to the Eritrean territories and joined the so-called armed Sudanese Alliance Forces based there. These Forces used to recruit former Sudanese soldiers and officers who were dismissed from the military service. The letter of the Eritrean Foreign Minister stated shamelessly that the so-called accused was unveiled by the Democratic National Alliance and not the Eritrean Security Organs, and here I quote:

> "... Captain AlKhairet's cover was exposed by the National Democratic Alliance on 20 April ...". End quote.

The Foreign Minister's letter about the so-called Captain stated that, and I quote:

> "... The assassination was planned to be carried out by Captain AlKhairet himself by way of infiltration into the Sudanese opposition coalition, the National Democratic Alliance to Eritrea on 14 November 1996 ...". End quote.

16. While we highlight these contradictions as examples only, we aim at clarifying that the Eritrean regime and the agents of the Sudanese opposition, in their fabrication of this naive drama, did not exert any effort to cite correct information about the person they have chosen for their conspiracy against the Government of the Sudan. But their sick imagination wove a plan and a story in which they used a single person with limited thinking, the highest education he ever had was part of the primary school, from which he was dismissed for ill behaviour and for creating disorder and havoc. This is clearly indicated in the statement of former Brigadier Abdel Azziz Khalid, leader of the so-called Alliance Forces, in an answer to a question by the London-based Arabic Newspaper "AlHayat" about the fate of Aba AlKhairet. He stated that Aba AlKhairet was, in the end, a Sudanese citizen and he would not be subjected to any trial and would continue to be with the Alliance Forces.

17. The Eritrean regime reached unimaginable heights in its sarcasm of the international community. It reached an extent unacceptable by reasonable logic through trying to convince that this same simple, uneducated person could be appointed as an officer with a rank of Captain in the Sudanese Security Organs. According to the Eritrean story, he is the same person who enjoys unlimited powers and authorizations within all the state institutions of the Sudan. The Eritrean regime went on to allege that this person as mentioned in his so called confessions is all of the following things:

First: He is entrusted with serious security missions that threaten the peace and security of all the neighbouring countries of the Sudan and other states without any exception;

Second: He is the only "Captain" out of thousands of Sudanese Captains who has access to and meet with all the Sudanese senior officials on a continuous basis, including the President of the Republic;

Third: He is well acquainted with the secrets of the Sudanese Government and the different security organs on all levels, starting from the Heads of those organs to the most junior soldiers in them;

Fourth: He is well informed and read about the dangerous terrorist missions undertaken by an experienced international terrorist, who is facing international justice today, namely, the terrorist Carlos. The international community is well aware of the circumstances surrounding his arrest in Khartoum by the Security Organs and his extradition to France to face justice there;

Fifth: He participates in all security investigations conducted by the Government of the Sudan with the alleged political detainees. He also has access to all the files of the investigations conducted by the Sudanese security organs.

18. The Eritrean regime did not stop at vilifying the ability of the Government of the Sudan, but extended its mockery to the international community by trying to undermine its intelligence. The Eritrean regime wants to convince everybody that the Government of the Sudan hired a person who did not complete his primary education, who has no knowledge of Eritrea as he himself has stated in the alleged confessions in order to assign him for this dangerous mission. I quote from page 24 (English version)

> "... In accordance with instructions, I was given another mission which was to go to Eritrea. I was a bit perturbed about that because I did not know anything about Eritrea ...". End quote.

In addition to that, the same person, according to the Eritrean story, was trained for three months only, that the Government of the Sudan wants to destabilize Eritrea and assassinate its President by spending only US$ 1,000 and 7 million Sudanese pounds (equivalent to 4,000 US dollars) and through infiltrating the Sudanese armed opposition harboured by Eritrea in its territories!!!! Can any ordinary person believe such a childish story, let alone the distinguished members of the Security Council!!!!

19. The Eritrean regime could fabricate whatever it wants. It can cite whomever it wants from the groups of armed opposition it shelters. It could attempt to delude the regional and international public opinion through boring repetitions of what it calls the Sudanese policies and terrorism. But it will not succeed in convincing the international community, neither of its keenness in the regional security and stability nor of its respect for good neighbourliness and the non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. In the eyes of those who have clear sight, this regime has become a threat to the peace and security of the whole region. This very fact is proved by the realities and issues presented to the esteemed Council by other States in the region. However there are issues which were not presented to the Council by some other States such as armed aggressions; attacks of internationally recognized borders; chasing, kidnapping and assassinating Eritrean opponents in

the neighbouring countries. These issues were not brought to the attention of the Council due to special considerations related to those States.

20. The Sudan, with its traditions, heritage and firm position known to all Members of the Council concerning terrorism, will continue to be faithful to its commitment to all the international principles, conventions and norms. It will continue to abide by the policies of good neighbourliness, the principles of peaceful co-existence, the respect for the choices of others and the respect of others for its choices. If the Eritrean regime tried this time to produce a theatrical play about a conspiracy plotted by the Sudan to assassinate its Leader, the Leader of that regime, who took refuge in the Sudan for three decades, knows very well before anybody else, that Sudan's traditions and principles prevent it from doing such a thing.

21. The Sudan has continued to shelter thousands of Eritrean refugees whom the Eritrean regime has refused the voluntary repatriation to their own country. The UNHCR is witness to this and knows very well the refusal of that regime of any agreement or commitment to repatriate the refugees. On the contrary, the Eritrean regime has showed another unprecedented action, by the expulsion of the representatives of the UNHCR from Asmara and their subjugation to humiliation. The expulsion of international officials has become a pattern in the policies of the Eritrean regime.

22. The accusations of the Eritrean regime of the involvement of the Sudan in the alleged assassination conspiracy of its President reflects undoubtedly the persistence of that regime to poison the regional atmosphere; and to divert the attention of the Sudan to unnecessary fights; and to mobilize the friendly African countries against it. In addition it leads to wasting the valuable time of the Members of the Council and to squandering the United Nations limited resources. These accusations were completely rejected by the Government of the Sudan at the time. The Sudan re-affirmed that the alleged accused has no relation to its organs and institutions.

23. The Sudan while refuting, once more in letter and spirit, the contents of the Eritrean letter to the Security Council, calls upon the Council to compel the Eritrean regime to be bound by the civilized international behaviour and to abide by the international principles which govern the relations between countries particularly in this region of the world which has suffered for a long time from conflicts and wars.

Ali Osman Mohamed TAHA
Minister of External Relations

Annexes:

1. Statement circulated by the delegation of the Sudan during the OAU Summit, Yaoundi, Cameroon 1996.

2. Statement circulated by the delegation of the Sudan during the OAU Summit, Harare, Zimbabwe 1997.

Enclosure I

[Original: English]

Statement of the delegation of the Sudan at Yaounde, 10 July 1996

In the typical diversionary style of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) Government, and in yet another unfortunate attempt to pollute the healthy African atmosphere currently prevailing in Yaounde, indeed in continuation of its shameful and well-remembered insults to the African leaders and the OAU during previous summits, the Eritrean delegation "discretely" circulated a statement in the name of its leader to the participants of the Summit, in which ridiculous accusations were levelled against the Sudan and its people.

It was the thinking of the Sudan that the Eritrean leadership would come to its senses following the condemnation by all Africa of its persistent moves in the past to distract OAU meetings from their real objectives. It was the hope harboured by many in our beloved continent that, through time, maturity in the actions and deeds of the Eritrean Government might prevail, and that such irresponsible practice that characterized the behaviour of that Government would cease to exist. Unfortunately, the statement circulated by Eritrea proved, in no uncertain terms, that the Eritrean Government is determined to stain the white page on which Africa wrote its new chapter of living in harmony and solidarity towards the attainment of its desired objectives.

In this statement, the EPLF delegation dared to talk about what it termed as Sudanese acts of destabilization. The EPLF Government's record in this regard is undoubtedly known to all. Its practices at home and abroad made Eritrea a big prison of its citizens and engulfed it in continuous war with itself and its neighbours in the immediate region and beyond. With its adventurist policies, Eritrea is today a major threat to regional and continental peace and stability. Its announced and well-known policies and subversive activities against the Sudan, with the "sky is the limit" in its support for Sudanese opposition and rebel elements, in the very words of the EPLF leader to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); its policy of expansion against neighbouring Djibouti; its destructive involvement in Somalia; its "new map" which threatens the region with serious consequences; its occupation of Hanish Island of Yemen; and its Red Sea adventures are all examples that speak for themselves. Eritrea is once more urged to come to its senses. The cold-war-like practices should be over; Africa cannot afford to be embroiled again in such practices, which would undoubtedly undermine its efforts towards peace and socio-economic development.

It is a surprise, indeed amusing, that the Eritrean statement contained sinister accusations pertaining to the issue of human rights in the Sudan. The EPLF Government would like to divert attention away from its refusal to accept the voluntary return of its refugees and the selective repatriation of those loyal to the EPLF and its resistance to signing a tripartite agreement requested by the Sudan, comprising the Sudan, Eritrea and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to facilitate the return of nearly a million Eritrean refugees in the Sudan whose basic human rights to return home are

denied by their Government. This policy of selective repatriation is coupled with the policy of ethnic discrimination internally against the Konama, Baza, Blain and Afar tribes in Eritrea. In talking about repression in the Sudan, the Eritrean regime would like Africa, indeed the whole world, to forget the physical liquidation of the following Eritrean leaders assassinated by the EPLF Government, just to mention a few:

- Abraham Twelde
- Haile Girza
- Mohamoud Hasab
- Osman Ageeb.

In his statement before the current OAU Summit, the President of the Sudan expressed the commitment of the Sudan to good neighbourliness and improved relations with all of its neighbours. The Sudanese statement was clear in supporting the current revitalized Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in its attempts to solve inter- and intra-state conflicts through dialogue. The Eritrean statement shows clearly the lack of seriousness and absence of political will of Eritrea towards the whole of the IGAD efforts. It is to be recalled in that connection that, in a gesture of good will, the Sudan fully supported the Eritrean candidate for the post of Executive Secretary of IGAD.

Rather than being a tool of destruction and destabilization in the region, the EPLF Government should understand that desisting from such practices is in its interest and in the interest of the whole region.

Enclosure II

[Original: English]

Statement of the delegation of the Sudan at Harare, 4 June 1997

In a typically cowardly behaviour that characterized his attitude vis-à-vis the Organization of African Unity and its members, the Eritrean leader chose once more to escape from this African gathering, opting instead to "discreetly" circulate a statement attacking one of the founding members of the Organization, namely, the Sudan. The annual habit of vomiting and levelling insults against a neighbouring country certainly unveils the distorted mind of the Eritrean leadership and its insistence on polluting the healthy atmosphere characterizing this session. At a time when a clear message was sent out from this conference on the need for a new spirit and attitude in order to tackle the continent's profound challenges and priorities, the Eritrean leadership chose for itself to be repeatedly out of context. Perhaps the only justification is that, by attacking others, the Eritrean leadership can hide its heinous, outrageous, unpopular and criminal practices at home and abroad.

That Eritrea is now a serious destabilizing element to the region, and indeed to the whole continent, is well known to Africa at large. Its declared and announced intention of invading the Sudan, its providing sanctuary to groups of bandits and killers bent on destruction and violence, its continuous violation of Sudanese territories, its regional ambitions and records of destabilization against some Red Sea countries, its flagrant violation of the principles of the OAU Charter on inter-state relations, and its repeated attempts to spoil the revitalized IGAD spirit are all examples of the sick mentality of the Eritrean leadership, which is undoubtedly a threat to continental peace and security.

Certainly, the internal situation in Eritrea speaks for itself. With an isolated minority government in place and more than 20 thousand political prisoners, the reign of terror in Eritrea has become a real source of concern to the whole people of the subregion. The waste of resources of a newly born nation on actions geared towards spreading hatred and chaos is a source of regret as well. That is also coupled with the shameful attitudes of the Eritrean leadership with regard to their own refugees abroad who are denied the right of repatriation by their own government. The phenomenon of selective repatriation has become the monopoly of this leadership as a negative contribution. Lately, the Eritrean leadership expelled the UNHCR representative, an act that seriously reflects the real intentions of the Eritrean leadership as far as its refugees outside are concerned. The Eritrean policy of targeting and massacring its own refugees in neighbouring countries is a sad reality. The list of the victims and those massacred upon the instructions of the Eritrean leadership is growing longer every day.

The history of the so-called EPLF also speaks for itself. It is an autocratic organization chaired by a dictator. EPLF committed countless murders against some of its leading figures, among them, Ibrahim A'fa, the military commander who was assassinated in a plot instigated by the Eritrean leader

himself. EPLF is a one-man organization. Its leader does not give any sort of respect to anybody, including the founding members. The recent sacking of the Foreign Minister, as well as the Commissioner for Refugees and his deputy, are only some manifestations.

The Sudan really sympathizes with the neighbouring Eritrean people in their ordeal. For Africa, it is time to confront the dangers posed to the continent's stability and security by the Eritrean regime. The Sudan is certainly capable of defending itself against an insane regime. Perhaps the Eritrean statement is yet another opportunity for the continent to draw its own conclusions.